



**GLOBAL
NET**

**STOP
THE
ARMS
TRADE**

**CASE 06 of the
GLOBAL NET – STOP THE ARMS TRADE (GN-STAT)**

**Murderous Walls – Profiteers of Isolation
Part 03: The Border Between the United Mexican States and
the United States of America¹
Executive Summary**

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¹ A note on language: The country 'United States of America' is often referred as simply 'America'. I find this difficult, because I was born in Mexico, so also in 'America', just not in the United States of.... I thus find it appropriate, following H.W. Schäfer (Kampf der Fundamentalismen, <http://dnb.d-nb.de>), to address this country politely as USA and to use the adjective 'US-American'.

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Executive Summary

This summary provides an overview of the many aspects of the complex conflict on both sides of the US-Mexican border. For the aspects highlighted in bold in this text, there are more in-depth appendices in the Case 06 Mexico-USA Border Directory on the Website of the Global Net – Stop the Arms Trade.

Since at least 1990, the catastrophic civil war-like situation in Mexico and other Latin American countries has been acutely visible at the "Southern Border" or "La Frontera del Norte" (depending on the country from which it is viewed), i.e. the border between the USA and Mexico: as a result of these conflicts, thousands of refugees arrive at this border, after long walks, many hardships and humiliations just to find themselves at the mercy of gangs of traffickers. They want to apply for asylum in the USA. They come there because the collapse of their home states through corruption, impunity, decay of the economy and not least through the deadly violence has deprived them of any prospects of a dignified life in their homeland.

But this is not true for all people for there are many who profit from this frontier. What has developed at this border since the end of the last century is an intricate system designed to satisfy certain needs – what one may call a “revolving door”. This is a market for seasonal low-wage harvest workers, traffickers, drug traffickers - very attractive to arms manufacturers and their corresponding traffickers and exporters.

Two factors have always been associated with the production and trade in arms:

First, the U.S. government and its **border agencies** soon took action with increasingly military-grade equipment and personnel as Mexicans began migrating north in growing numbers since the 1920, initially fleeing revolution and later in search of work.

Secondly, for drug producers and traffickers, the enormous drug consumption in the U.S. has opened up an extremely lucrative market. They further expanded their activities to trafficking in women and prostitution for U.S. customers in cities near the border in Mexico.

On the U.S. side, entire drug cartels equip themselves with the necessary weapons because of lax **U.S. gun laws**². Most importantly, this situation opens up a lucrative market for **U.S. and international arms manufacturers**. For several years now, well-known manufacturers have been setting up more and more branches and licensed dealerships in the border-taking "southern states"³ (Arizona, California, Florida and Texas).

² Parsons, Chelsea, Weigend Vargas, Eugenio, Bathia, Rukman: The gun Industry in America. The Overlooked Player in a National Crisis. Center for American Progress, Gun Violence Prevention. Washington D.C 08.2020. 99.S., S. 4.In: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2020/08/06/488686/gun-industry-america/> Accessed: 12.2020

³ Thorp, Gene. New England's gun Valley roiled by Newton Massacre. Washington Post, 27.02.2013. In: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/new-england-gun-belt-at-heart-of-debate/2013/02/27/3aaf160a-7b9b-11e2-82e8-61a46c2cde3d_story.html Accessed: 12.2020

Although only a small percentage of the enormous quantity of guns in circulation in Mexico is the result of direct importation at the border⁴, smuggled weapons fuel competition between drug cartels and general crime. The flood of pistols and rifles flowing into Mexico through entirely official channels and then illegally into other hands through opaque channels has brought a new wave of violence upon the country. Experts estimate that 70% of these weapons enter the country from or through the United States⁵. The number of **victims of small arms** is in the hundreds of thousands, in addition to thousands of disappeared persons whose fate is unknown.

For drug producers and traffickers, the enormous drug consumption in the U.S. has opened an extremely lucrative market, which is also expanded by trafficking in women and prostitution for U.S. customers in cities near the border to Mexico.

Public safety did not start to break down in Mexico with the start of the pandemic in spring of 2020:

The collapse of infrastructure - also as a result of the use of so-called SALWs (Small Arms and Light Weapons - i.e., portable arms) - is leading to supply problems, famine and impoverishment. Corrupt Mexican state officials, themselves involved in drug trafficking, try to prevent any reporting. Political repression is ubiquitous. Impunity for perpetrators is widespread, human rights violations go unpunished, as evidenced by the immensely high number of **murdered journalists⁶ and women⁷**, making Mexico one of the most dangerous countries for these groups of people.

The migration movement throughout Latin America only became visible in the media when Donald Trump (US President 2017-2021), during his 2016 election campaigns, went on a particularly blatant campaign to win voters along this thin line between the USA - the "dreamed-of paradise" from the refugees' point of view - and Mexico. Among his supporters, populist and xenophobic slogans fueled fears of foreign "invasion", job loss, perceived rape, crime, and death-bringing Latinxs.

⁴ Goodwin, Zachary: [US Hemorrhaging Weapons to Mexico, One at a Time](https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/us-mexico-border-hemorrhaging-weapons/). Insight Crime, Investigations and Analysis of Organized Crime. 08.09.2020. In: <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/us-mexico-border-hemorrhaging-weapons/> Accessed: 12.2020

⁵ Báez Zamudio, N.P., Chávez Vargas, L.G., Lindsay Poland, John, Martínez Téllez, M.: [Gross Human Rights and Abuses: The legal and illegal gun Trade to Mexico](https://www.stopusarmstomexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/THE-LEGAL-AND-ILLEGAL-GUN-TRADE-TO-MEXICOAugust2018.pdf). Hrsg.: Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights / Stop IS Arms Trade to Mexico. Mexico City 2018. <https://www.stopusarmstomexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/THE-LEGAL-AND-ILLEGAL-GUN-TRADE-TO-MEXICOAugust2018.pdf> Accessed: 10.08.2019, S. 5

⁶.. Zahlenangaben und Nachrufe für Journalisten in Mexiko: Democracia abierta: [Mexico's Tragic Chain: 133 journalists' lives lost](https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/la-cadena-tragica-133-vidas-perdidas-por-informar-en-mexico-en/), 22.07.2020 This article is part of a SinEmbargo.MX and Democracia Abierta research project, supported by the Justice for Journalists Foundation. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/la-cadena-tragica-133-vidas-perdidas-por-informar-en-mexico-en/> Accessed: 30.10.2020 / <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/la-cadena-tragica-133-vidas-perdidas-por-informar-en-mexico-en/>

⁷ Vgl. Jorge Monroy, [Violencia de Género: Feminicidios en México se mantienen al alza](https://www.economista.com.mx/politica/Feminicidios-en-Mexico-se-mantienen-al-alza). El Economista, 21.04.2020; in: <https://www.economista.com.mx/politica/Feminicidios-en-Mexico-se-mantienen-al-alza-crecieron-1.6-en-primer-trimestre-del-2020-20200421-0112.html> Accessed: 30.10.2020

As much as Donald Trump wanted to be the savior of the nation, he has only placed himself in the political tradition of his predecessors, which reaches far into the history of the United States.

The chapter on the **origins and history of the U.S.-Mexican border** describes how it has taken on the shape it has today and how, since 1924, all U.S. administrations have set up bureaucratic and increasingly **militarized programs to secure it**.

From the perspective of Daniel Denvir⁸, journalist and book author, the U.S. president's "build the wall" chant and dehumanizing remarks about foreigners only openly and bluntly crowns an entire century of "All-American Nativism" in U.S. politics. This term goes back to the U.S. Naturalization Act of 1790, which welcomed every foreigner as long as he was a "free white person" and excluded all who were not and was enshrined in laws protecting the interests of so-called "white natives" (i.e. so called Americans)⁹.

According to Denvir, all of Donald Trump's predecessors, have already built more walls, fences and cages than he himself could ever have built in an effort to secure the U.S. as a white country for white people. Back in 2016, Border Patrol Union Chairman Brandon Judd expressed that it was unnecessary to want to build wall along the entire border. A large part of the border had already been sufficiently closed-off for years with various types of fencing¹⁰.

Incidentally, US President Trump had already taken his announcement to build a "wonderful wall" out of daily politics a year before the end of his term. Initially, he wanted to make Mexico pay for it. Then, with presidential power, appropriating money from other government agencies, great financial effort and without regard for environmental protection laws, he ordered the installation of a series of prototypes for the new wall facilities from 2017¹¹.

The profiles of some **construction companies** show how lobbyists in the construction industry draw a profit from politically escalating situations: with targeted party donations, the amount of which significantly influences the recommendation for a particular company to the responsible authority¹².

⁸ Daniel Denvir: All-American Nativism. How the bipartisan war on immigrants explains politics as we know it. Verso Books, London New York 2020. S. 11

⁹Ibid., p. 19

¹⁰ Quoted from: Jeffrey Roddack, Trump's US-Mexico Border Wall Could Be Just 200 Miles Long, Newsmax. Independent American, 17.11.2016, <https://www.newsmax.com/us/trump-border-wall-mexico/2016/11/17/id/759432/> Accessed 04.12.2019

¹¹ C.f. Miguel Márquez, 8 border wall prototypes on display, CNN , o.J., in: <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/10/26/trump-eight-border-wall-prototypes-marquez-dnt-ac.cnn> Accessed: 03.11.2020

¹² McFeely, McFeely: Tommy Fisher, wannabe border wall builder and Cramer ally, 'thumbed nose' at government Grand Forks Herald, 8.06.2019: „Tommy Fisher has North Dakota U.S. Sen. Kevin Cramer and U.S. Rep. Kelly Armstrong on his side, admittedly good allies to have for the Fisher Industries chief executive officer in his quest to make hundreds of millions of dollars from building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. Cramer has advocated for Fisher to build the wall and Tommy Fisher donated to the senator's campaign in 2018. Armstrong has also featured Fisher Industries, based in Dickinson, N.D., and its wall-building capabilities on his Twitter Feed" in: <https://www.grandforksherald.com/opinion/columns/2289186->

Donald Trump's brazenness was demonstrated in 2018 when he passed off completed sections of the fence on the Mexican border as parts of his "wonderful wall" and inaugurated them under massive media attention. In doing so, he knew to conceal the fact that these were projects that his predecessors George W. Bush and Barack Obama had long ordered and paid for but were only completed when Trump came into office¹³.

By all accounts, the former president has realized that his wall would not cover the entire 2,000 or so miles, but only 200¹⁴. This fact does not seem to have bothered his voters. Donald Trump's "wonderful wall" has remained piecemeal, but the militarized border programs long enacted before him continue. For him, the very old and now volatile conflict on the border with Mexico was an occasion to create sentiment. In his bid for a second term, this conflict no longer played a role. The 2016 election campaign, however, was worthwhile because the uncertainty generated at that time gripped a large majority of Latinxs originating from Latin America, for example in Texas. In the 2020 election, they voted for a second term for Donald Trump.

The U.S. as a multicultural "melting pot" is a myth. In the U.S. the prison-industrial complex thrives, feeding off especially poorer communities of people of colour: African Americans, Latinxs, Asians, and Arabs. No other country has such a high percentage of its population behind bars¹⁵. In the Border Enforcement Zone, a 100-mile strip within the borders of the United States, about two-thirds of the U.S. population is monitored and controlled¹⁶. This is a designated area where designated agencies have special rights, such as the highly armed Border Patrol, the violence-prone police, and also the militarized National Guard.

Arms shipments to Mexico and Drug Trafficking

Trump's policy has cast a media spotlight on the "problem of illegal immigration" across the Mexican border into the U.S., raising fears of the supposedly immense "criminal energy" it imports. This was a power-political tactic that cleverly played on the existing xenophobic sentiment of his constituents.

[McFeely-Tommy-Fisher-wannabe-border-wall-builder-and-Cramer-ally-thumbed-nose-at-government](#)

Accessed: 02.05.2021

¹³ C.f.: Adolfo Flores, *Trump visited the Border to celebrate his „New Wall.“ It actually dates back to the Obama Era.* 05.04.2019, BussFeed News, MacAllen, Texas. in: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/adolfoflores/trump-border-wall-replacement-mexico-california-obama> Accessed: 14.12.2019.

¹⁴ Following Trump's election Brandon Judd of the Border Patrol Unit said in an interview with NPR on Nov. 7th, 2016: "What I really appreciate about President-elect Trump is he understands that he doesn't know everything. And every single time I've sat down and spoke with him, we've talked about a wall, we've about whether it needs to be the full 2,000 miles of the southwest border or if we just need it in strategic locations, and he's been willing to very listen and that's refreshing.". *Border Patrol Agents' Union Confers With Trump On Securing The Border*, By EDITOR • NOV 17, 2016, in: <https://www.wuwm.com/post/border-patrol-agents-union-confers-trump-securing-border#stream/0> Accessed: 15.11.2019.

¹⁵ C.f. Wendy Sawyer, Peter Wagner: *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020*, Policy Prison Initiative, 24.03.2020, in: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>

¹⁶ American Civil Liberties Union: *ICE and Border Patrol Abuses*, In: <https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses>. Accessed: 04.10.2020

Not a word is said about the southward counter-flow from the U.S. to Mexico¹⁷: the huge, deadly flood of weapons¹⁸ pouring into Mexico and all of Latin America from the U.S. and other countries is a bubbling source of revenue for U.S. and international arms manufacturers¹⁹, fed by the black money of drug sales²⁰. However, as journalist and peace activist John Lindsey Poland²¹ rightly points out, the weapons from the U.S. are sold primarily to Mexican authorities, the Ministries of Defense SEDENA and the Navy SEMAR, who take responsibility for the arms, but are by no means the end user.

It is difficult to trace by what opaque paths the weapons then make their way into the hands of criminals. Reliable sources estimate that several million weapons are currently in circulation in Mexico²². These include, thanks to the liberal gun laws in the U.S. and due to the lack of controls during sales and in border customs²³, entire arsenals that are purchased directly in the U.S. in straw-purchases²⁴, mostly by U.S. citizens. Behind the border they bring high profit. With all these weapons, corruption and violence are fueled and impunity is enforced in Mexico. The murder rate reaches new heights every year. Experts see this as the reason why so many people want to immigrate to the - from the refugees' point of view - "safe" United States.

Anthropologist Howard Campbell, a professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, describes drug trafficking as an illegal form of capital accumulation that celebrates wealth through rampant consumerism, fostered by neoliberalism and by drug traffickers' corrupt collusion with government authorities. Ultimately, he said, drug trafficking became integral to the U.S. and

¹⁷ McDougal, Topher L.; Shirk, David A.; Muggah, Robert; Patterson, John H.: *The Way of the Gun: Estimation firearms Trafficking across the US Mexico Border*, Journal of Economic Geography, 2015, vol 15,297-3327. Doi: 10.1093/jeg/lbu021.

¹⁸ In 2017 the number of SALW circulating in Mexico was estimated at about 20 Million, c.f. the video „*Seminario Violencia y paz: las armas de fuego*“ from the Colegio de México from June 20th, 2017, led by Sergio Aguayo (in Spanish). John Linsey Poland speaks about the import of weapons by Mexican agencies: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZLNoRsOjtc&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR3OJpWtKzRecPyNDRWtrSSjirP3bR07Ihjq8tM9pEGpWTBc8CTL1fji7Q#>

¹⁹ Muggah, Robert; Mc. Dougal, Topher: *Why a 'Great Wall won't stop the Cross-Border Gun Trade*. American Quarterly, 26.04.2017, S. 3. In: <https://americasquarterly.org/fulltextarticle/why-a-great-wall-wont-stop-the-cross-border-gun-trade/> Accessed: 05.2019

²⁰ Martínez, Gabriela: *The flow of guns from the U.S. to Mexico is getting lost in the border debate*. PBD News Hour 12.06,2019. In <https://stopusarmstomexico.org/the-flow-of-guns-from-the-u-s-to-mexico-is-getting-lost-in-the-border-debate/> Accessed 08,2019

²¹ Báez Zamudio, N.P., Chávez Vargas, L.G., Lindsay Poland, John, Martínez Téllez,M.: *Gross Human Rights and Abuses: The legal and illegal gun Trade to Mexico*. Hrsg.: Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights / Stop IS Arms Trade to Mexico. Mexico City 2018. <https://www.stopusarmstomexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/THE-LEGAL-AND-ILLEGAL-GUN-TRADE-TO-MEXICOAugust2018.pdf> Accessed: 10.08.2019, S. 9

²² John Lindsay-Poland: *How US Guns sold to Mexico end up with Security Forces accused of Crime and Human Rights Abuses*, The Intercept, 26.04.2018 <https://theintercept.com/2018/04/26/mexico-arms-trade-us-gun-sales/> Accessed: 10.08.2019

²³ Juliane Ruhfus: *The day I got my AK-47: Guns, Mexican Drug cartels and US laws*. Aljazeera, 21.02.2018 <https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/americas/2018/03/day-ak-47-guns-mexican-drug-cartels-laws-180320134720160.html> Accessed 01.2019 und 10.2020

²⁴ Weigend Vargas, Eugenio; Villareal González, Silvia: *Regulatory Challenges for preventing firearms smuggling into Mexico* / Mexican Law Review Vol. 7, Issue 2, pages 68-81 (Jan. Jun 2015) S. 17. In: <https://www.elsevier.es/en-revista-mexican-law-review-123-articulo-regulatory-challenges-for-preventing-firearms-S1870057816300038>. Accessed: 12.2020.

Mexican economic systems. The border space, Campbell argues, is a fluid transnational cultural space in which rival forces struggle over the meaning, value, and control of drugs²⁵.

Crucially, the struggle is fought with the aforementioned weapons which play an empowering role in it for their owners.

Military and Electronic Sealing of the Border

In 2003, a report was commissioned by the Pentagon²⁶ to determine the threats to the U.S. from climate-related migration due to disasters such as droughts or hurricanes. The goal was to "upgrade borders so that hunger-stricken migrants from the Caribbean Islands, Mexico, and South America would be deterred from crossing the border." However, this multi-billion-dollar process had been underway at the time since 1994, thanks to a steady increase in Border Patrol personnel and their equipment with military-grade weaponry. After 9/11, support was sought from Israeli companies for border security and surveillance flights were authorized using Hermes drones made by Elbit Systems²⁷.

But what was new was that in 2006, Congress authorized equipping the 700-mile Arizona-Sonora border with electronic surveillance technology called SBINet²⁸. Five years later, they abandoned that system and CBP (Customs and Border Protection) turned to Elbit again in 2012. In 2014, at a cost of \$145 million, the southern Arizona border was equipped with an integrated system of electronic watchtowers and radar-equipped blimps, ground sensors and facial recognition software - all, as the manufacturer pointed out, products field-proven in the Gaza Strip²⁹. With the establishment of the **University of Arizona's "Global Advantage Program"** with its designated "**tech parks**" the long-standing cooperation between Israeli and U.S. weapons manufacturers picked up.

Stephen Graham, professor of urbanism, writes that the resulting security and military industrial complex connects the two countries as if with an umbilical cord in such a way that it can actually be seen as a single "diversified transnational entity"³⁰. Journalist Jimmy Johnson coined the term "Palestine-Mexico border" for this³¹.

Jeff Halper, Israeli professor of anthropology and peace activist, fears that it is not only Israeli technology but also "the security state" spreading throughout the world, a concoction of

²⁵ Howard Campbell. *Drug War Zone: Frontline Dispatches from the Streets of El Paso and Juárez*. https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/An_Abrupt_Climate_Change_Scenario_and_Its_Impl.pdf, p.18 see also: <https://monthlyreview.org/2004/05/01/the-pentagon-and-climate-change/>

²⁶ Schwartz, Peter and Randall, Doug: Pentagon 2003 report, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and its Implications for United States National Security*, https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/An_Abrupt_Climate_Change_Scenario_and_Its_Impl.pdf, P.18 see also: <https://monthlyreview.org/2004/05/01/the-pentagon-and-climate-change/>

²⁷ C.f. GN-STAT Fall 06 „Israel“ von Shir Hever und Wolfgang Landgraeber.

²⁸ Homeland Security News Wire: Why SBINet failed. 20.02.2010. In: <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/why-sbinet-has-failed>. Zugriff: 05.06.2020

²⁹ Hever, Shir, Landgraeber, Wolfgang: GN-STAT Case 03 „Israel“ in: <https://www.gn-stat.org/?p=703>

³⁰ Stephen Graham, *Cities under Siege: The military Urbanism*, Verso Book, London 2010

³¹ Jimmy Johnson, *A Palestine Mexico Border*, NACLA, 29,06,2012; in: <https://nacla.org/blog/2012/6/29/palestine-mexico-border>. Accessed: 04.02.2020

practices that "reframe" war: the police are militarized, the military is given policing duties. Halper calls this the MISSILE complex, an acronym for "military, internal security, intelligence and law enforcement." Israel thus spreads a system of control of "Global Palestine"³² and the U.S. can continue the war on immigration³³.

Will Parrish, of the magazine "The Intercept", writes that this kind of militarization promises high profits for technology and defense companies. Leading companies with border security contracts, such as **Lockheed Martin**, and start-ups like **Andúril Industries** are supplying this growing market with IT and surveillance sensors, especially near the border³⁴. Since 2016, the state of Arizona has been promoting Tech Parks to attract more arms companies³⁵. The border closure is being consolidated: Terms like "cyber-physical wall" (increasingly remote-controlled wall installations on computers) or "border security" successfully hide what is at stake here: people seeking protection in their desperation.

US defense production in Mexico

Due to low wages, Mexico has long been an attractive production location for U.S. industry. Since the 1990s, **U.S. defense companies** have also set up so-called "**Maquiladoras**" (processing and assembly plants) for manufacturing military products in the border region of Mexico - as part of the NADIB (North American Defense Industrial Bases)³⁶. These companies include, for example, Emerson Space, GE Aerospace, Stuart-Warner, General Dynamics, TRZW, Westinghouse and Rockwell International, among others³⁷. Special trade agreements between the two countries allow the U.S. to export material imports and finished parts duty-free. The final assembly of all these military and border security parts is done "for security reasons" in the U.S., which is where the value is added at that point.

The NAFTA agreement of 1994 opened up these opportunities for companies and gave workers the illusion of prosperity. Politically, the idea prevailed that migrants could be kept on the Mexican side through deterrent isolation and that they could be offered jobs at wages that,

³² From Todd Miller: Empire of Borders. The expansion of the US Border around the world. London 2019. S. 79

³³ Massey, Douglas S, Pen, Karen A.: La Guerra de los Estados Unidos contra la inmigración. Efectos paradójicos. Veröffentlicht als Doc.Anal.Geogr. 2013 May-Aug; 59(2): 209-237. In: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4827256/>, Accessed: 11.2020.

³⁴ Will Parrish. The US-border patrol and an Israeli military contractor are putting a native American Reservation under "persistent surveillance". The Intercept, 25.08.2019. <https://theintercept.com/2019/08/25/border-patrol-israel-elbit-surveillance/> Accessed: 01.08.2020

³⁵ Bruce A. Wright, David Allen: Southern Arizona and Defense Industry 's best kept secret. TechConnect, Arizonas Technology Magazine, 20.07.2016, in: <https://www.azcommerce.com/tech-connect/aerospace-defense/2016/7/20/southern-arizona-the-aerospace-and-defense-industry-s-best-kept-secret/> Accessed: 15.05.2020

³⁶ Congress of the United States Office of Technology Assessment: Redesigning Defense: Planning the Transition to the Future U.S: Defense Industrial Base: U.S. Defense Production in Mexico. Diane Publishing Books, 1991, S. 112 -114. In: <https://books.google.de/books?id=eeTuLpdjun8C&hl=de&sitesec=reviews>. Accessed: 02.08.2020

³⁷ Ibid. Also see: The University of Arizona, TechParks Arizona: Tenants List. Over 40 companies and organizations make their home at the UA Tech Park. Information current as of October 2019. In: <https://techparks.arizona.edu/tech-park/right/tenants-list> Accessed: 10.09.2020

in many cases, saved the clients up to 90% in costs³⁸. The working and housing conditions of the labor force-often stranded migrants-are flagrant violations of human rights in many ways. Contributing to this are Mexican authorities who are unable to absorb the surplus of workers and often simply deny them decent housing, as was seen in the example of the city of Mexicali³⁹.

Violence against migrants, victims of the border, relief organizations

The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) has noted an increase in the number of immigrants arrested and deported by the U.S. Border and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) in recent years⁴⁰. The ACLU points out that in doing so, the agency disregards the right to equal treatment guaranteed by the 4th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, including the right to be heard and to due process⁴¹. In 2010, National Public Radio (NPR) aired a report on how Senator Russell Pearce pushed Arizona's immigration law with the help of large organizations (e.g., the NRA- National Rifle Association and the SSF - Shooting Sports Foundation) and that became a "promising new market" for the private prison industry⁴².

To deter families, since 2017 the Border Patrol has systematically separated children from infancy from their loved ones and transferred them to the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)⁴³. Donald Trump strengthened these measures with an executive order in May 2018⁴⁴. By October 2020, a total of 5000 families and 2654 children were affected. These were distributed across 17 US states in 121 shelter centers. Many of the children have since been returned to their parents. However, the lawyers of the ACLU emphasize that (as of 10.2020) the parents of 545 children can not be found⁴⁵.

³⁸ C.f. note 23

³⁹ Fuentes Romero, David, F, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la UA de Baja California.: *Migración y fuerzas de trabajo en los asentamientos humanos irregulares de la ciudad de Mexicali, B.C. 1920 – 1982*. Resumen de "Características específicas de la región fronteriza en Baja California."

Ágora-MigracionYFuerzaDeTrabajoEnLosAsentamientosHumanos-5196381.pdf . Accessed: 12.2020.

⁴⁰ American Civil Liberties Union: *ICE and Border Patrol Abuses*. Hier werden 696 Fälle von Übergriffen der US- Grenzpolizei aufgelistet.: <https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses> Accessed: 04.10.2020

⁴¹ Ebenda.

⁴² Laura Sullivan: *Prison Economics Help Drive Arizona Immigration Law*, NPR Morning Edition,28.10.2010. In: <https://www.npr.org/2010/10/28/130833741/prison-economics-help-drive-ariz-immigration-law> auch dabei 7 Minuten Audiodatei. Accessed: 28.10.2020

⁴³ *Office of Refugee Resettlement – Administration for children and families*. In <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr> Accessed: 09.09.2020

⁴⁴ Natalie Escobar *Family Separation Isn't New. US immigration policy has traumatized migrant children and parents for nearly a century*. The Atlantic 14.08.2018. In: <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/08/us-immigration-policy-has-traumatized-children-for-nearly-100-years/567479/> Accessed: 22.10.2020

⁴⁵ Teo Armus, Maria Sacchetti, Reporter on the Morning Mix team: *The parents of 545 children separated at the border still haven't been found. The pandemic isn't helping*. Washington Post 21.10.2020. In: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/10/21/family-separation-parents-border-covid/> Accessed: 21.10.2020.: 22.10.2020 Siehe auch: Caitlin Dickerson: *Parents of 545 Children Separated at the Border Cannot Be Found*. The New York Times, 21.10.2020. In: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/21/us/migrant-children-separated.html> Accessed: 22.10.2020

People seek protection in the U.S. and accept long journeys of deprivation and humiliation, suffer loss, hunger and disease. If they make it across the border, the mercilessly dry desert awaits them almost everywhere. Hardly anyone survives in scorching temperatures for more than 48 hours. Turning to the Border Patrol is out of the question because of the danger of arrest and deportation. Help in medical facilities is made impossible because they are monitored by the Border Patrol. The number of victims can only be approximated because of the very different survey methods. The organization Breakthrough India states that between 1990 and 2011 the remains of at least 6,000 migrants were found in the Arizona desert (cause of death thirst, starvation). The UN only officially introduced a general count from 2014 that includes other causes of death (shooting, drowning). For the period between 2014 and 2019, Noticias UN indicates 2403 deaths along the entire border. Of these, 304 for the Arizona desert in 2018 and 2019. IOM (UN-International Organization for Migration) records 96 deaths on the US-Mexico border for the first 4 months of 2021 alone. However, forensic experts concede, that the real number is likely much higher. Tiny unrecognizable remains often can no longer be attributed to a specific person⁴⁶.

Death as a deterrent, the desert as a weapon, that is a declared means of the US government's isolation policy. According to the Alliance for Global Justice⁴⁷, in 2010 a report by the Congressional Research Service openly spoke of using the "new policy" of militarizing urban border areas to divert migrant flows to "geographically harsher" and remote areas (e.g., the desert in Arizona and Texas) to keep them from crossing the border. As early as the "Border Patrol Strategic Plan: 1994 and beyond. National Strategy,"⁴⁸ this type of deterrence was codified as an appropriate means to ensure the nation's security⁴⁹.

Help for refugees comes from civically engaged volunteers⁵⁰, mostly from Christian-oriented circles. One of the founders of the "Sanctuary Movement", Rev. John Fife of the Southside United Presbyterian Church in Tucson, organized a network that, as early as the 1990s, saved those seeking help from dying of thirst by setting up water cans and offered church asylum to the injured. They were later joined by the "Samaritans"⁵¹, "No

⁴⁶ Breakthrough India: *DESERTED: The Human Rights Crisis on Our Soil*, 14.12.2011: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dobue_Anrxg&feature=emb_title Zugriff: 10. 2020 // Noticias UN <https://news.un.org/es/story/2020/01/1468662> // IOM Missing Migrants, Tracking deaths along migratory routes: Americas <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/americas?region=1422>, Accessed: 29.04.2021 // PBS News Hour v. 21.20.2018: What happens when migrants die in the Arizona desert. in: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/what-happens-when-migrants-die-in-the-arizona-desert> Accessed: 11.2020

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2019/02/20/466144/language-access-life-death-consequences-migrants/> Accessed: 11.2020

⁴⁷ Gabe Shivone: *Death as Deterrence: The Desert as a Weapon*. Alliance for Social Justice <https://afgj.org/death-as-deterrence-the-desert-as-a-weapon>. Accessed: 10.2020

⁴⁸ Prepared by the US-Border Patrol July 1994: Border Patrol Strategic Plan: 1994 and beyond. <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=721845> Accessed: 9.9.2020

⁴⁹ Goodwin, Zachary: Netflix's Immigration Nation' – How Criminals and Companies Exploit Migration. Insight Crime, 28.08.2020, in: <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/netflix-immigration-nation/> Accessed: 12.2020

⁵⁰ Ryan Deveroux: Bodies in the Borderlands. The Intercept. In: <https://theintercept.com/2019/05/04/no-more-deaths-scott-warren-migrants-border-arizona/> Accessed: 12.10.2020

⁵¹ James Verini, *How US Policy Turned the Sonoran Desert into a Graveyard for Migrants*. *Recovered Human Remains*. The New York Times, August 2020. In: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/magazine/border-crossing.html> Accessed: 10.10.2020

More Deaths” and “The Tucson Samaritans, Human Borders”⁵², who feel it is their duty to step in where the state fails. As part of their commitment, they also consider it their duty to attempt to make a forensic identification of the bodies they find - often based solely on bone remains or papers. In this way, relatives in Mexico can be contacted and notified, often years later⁵³.

Many of these volunteers are persecuted by the authorities, as the head of the border police union officially and blatantly expressed on Fox News 2020⁵⁴. This is what happened, for example, to 23-year-old Shanti Sellz and Daniel Strauss, who brought three seriously injured people to a church for medical care during the extreme heat of 2005. They were charged with smuggling and conspiracy and sentenced to 15 years in prison⁵⁵.

Concluding Remarks

United States Governments have always found ways to develop legal, bureaucratic, and military means to expand their country's borders, seal them off, and limit or eliminate the admission of migrants. This trend has a long history; there is nothing to suggest that it will not continue into the future. Donald Trump has been merely jumped on the band wagon. The situation in Mexico is worsening by the day.

What Israeli peace activist Michael Warschawski said applies to this border, as it does to almost all of them: they are the expression of "two opposing movements, they separate people according to nationality, ethnicity, faith and class."⁵⁶ Action and reaction actually condition each other on both sides, with a pronounced imbalance of power between Mexico and the United States. Mexican photographer and journalist Julián Cardona writes that there is probably no other border "that so drastically separates rich from poor, where for more than 3,000 km the most powerful state in the world borders a country whose gross national product is just 4.5% of its own. A thousand-year-old culture, weakened by constant conquests, mismanagement and corruption, clashes here with one of the greatest economic powers on the planet"⁵⁷.

This contribution has attempted to present some of the very different factors that characterize the situation at the Mexico-U.S. border at the moment. Three interdependent

⁵² The Tucson Samaritans: Human borders, fronteras compasivas: *Saving Migrant Lives in the Arizona Desert*, in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxPTRunpC20> Accessed: 12.10.2020. Siehe hierzu auch: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%23GrottoStories Accessed: 11.10.2020

⁵³ 2019 Reineke, Robin: *Necroviolence and Postmortem Care Along the U.S.-Mexico Border*, in: *The Border and Its Bodies*, edited by Thomas Sheridan and Randall McGuire, University of Arizona Press, forthcoming Fall 2019

⁵⁴ Brandon Judd: *Fighting sanctuary policies is just as important as building the border wall*. Fox News, 22.02.2020 in: <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/brandon-judd-fighting-sanctuary-policies-is-just-as-important-as-building-the-border-wall> Accessed: 10.2020

⁵⁵ By Associated Press: *Volunteers fight arrests for aiding illegals. Faith-based group No More Deaths saves immigrants*. Apr 2, 2006; in: <https://www.deseret.com/2006/4/2/19946256/volunteers-fight-arrests-for-aiding-illegals> // <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB115720502963752670> Accessed: 04.2018

⁵⁶ Michael Warschawski: *An der Grenze*. Lutz Schulenberg Verlag, Hamburg 2003.

⁵⁷ Julián Cardona: *Mexiko – US: La frontera, 2000*. In: Über die Grenze. Fotoreportagen und Essays. Hrsg. Von Pro Helvetia, DEZA, Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit. Zürich 2001.

elements are common to them and are particularly conflictual, although very different in nature: Drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and the violation of migrants' human rights. We at GN-STAT take a special look at the arms trade. It claims almost the same number of victims on both sides. It seems important to us not only to lament them, but to reveal the actions of the perpetrators, that is, the arms manufacturers and the ways of distribution and trade and illegal export. We need support in this. Through information, actions and cooperation, influence can be exerted to ease the situation of the people, to denounce grievances and to spoil the business of the numerous profiteers of the situation. Global Net - Stop the Arms Trade (GN-STAT.org) offers a platform to all who want to become active in this sense. Write to us!

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